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When 'What' Means 'Why': On Accusative wh-adjuncts in Japanese

Abstract
This paper considers properties of the Japanese Accusative wh-adjunct 'nani-o (what-Acc)' (Kurafuji, 1996, 1997; Ochi, 1999) in sentences such as "Kare-wa nani-o sawai-dei-ru no? (lit. What is he making a noise?)". Although the Accusative wh-adjunct 'nani-o' is usually translated in the same way as 'naze (why)', there are a number of differences between them: (i) 'Nani-o' has an animacy restriction on the subject, (ii) it has some special speaker's inference, and (iii) it is incompatible with sluicing (Ochi, 1999). We will explain the properties (i) and (ii) by claiming that Accusative wh-adjuncts are base-generated in a functional projection FP, which is related to speaker's illocutionary force. We attribute the property (iii) to Fox and Lasnik's (2003) parallelism condition on sluicing; because Accusative wh-adjuncts are base-generated in a different position from other reason adjuncts, they do not satisfy parallelism with the corresponding adjunct in the antecedent clause. By clarifying the syntactic positions of the two types of reason adjuncts, we attempt to contribute to the typological study of adjuncts.

Chizuru Nakao and Miki Obata

1 Introduction

This paper considers properties of the Japanese Accusative wh-adjunct nani-o ‘what-Acc’ (Kurafuji, 1996, 1997; Ochi, 1999), focusing on its differences from the authentic wh-adjunct naze ‘why.’ (1) illustrates examples of the Accusative wh-adjunct nani-o. It is used with an intransitive verb (such as sawagu ‘make noise’ in (1a)) or a transitive verb (such as utau ‘sing’ in (1b)), and is usually translated as ‘why,’ in the same way as the reason adjunct naze ‘why’ in (2).1

(1) a. Kare-wa nani-o sawai-dei-ru no?
He-TOP what-ACC make-noise-PROG-PRES Q
‘Why is he making a noise?’
b. (??) Kare-wa nani-o henna uta-o utat-tei-ru no?
He-TOP what-ACC funny song-ACC sing-PROG-PRES Q
‘Why is he singing a funny song?’
(2) a. Kare-wa naze sawai-deu-ru no?
He-TOP why make-noise-PROG-PRES Q
‘Why is he making a noise?’
b. Kare-wa naze henna uta-o utat-tei-ru no?
He-TOP why funny song-ACC sing-PROG-PRES Q
‘Why is he singing a funny song?’

The Accusative wh-adjunct nani-o shows an Accusative Case marker -o, although there is no apparent Case assigner for it. Nani-o in (1a) has an Accusative Case marker when the intransitive verb ‘make noise’ should not assign Accusative Case. In (1b), the Accusative Case of the transitive verb ‘sing’ is assigned to its direct object (‘a funny song’), but an extra Accusative Case marker shows up on nani-o.

Although nani-o has been assumed to have the same meaning as naze, there are also a number of differences between them. Below we will show that (i) Accusative wh-adjuncts have an animacy restriction on the subject, (ii) Accusative wh-adjuncts have some special speaker’s inference, and (iii) Accusative wh-adjuncts are incompatible with sluicing (Ochi, 1999). We will attribute these differences to their structural positions: nani-o is base-generated in a higher position than the position of standard ‘reason’ adjuncts. We claim that Accusative wh-adjuncts are licensed in a functional projection, which we will call FP. By clarifying the syntactic positions of these adjuncts, we attempt to contribute to the typological study of adjuncts.

The paper is organized in the following way. In Section 2, we review Kurafuji’s (1996, 1997) argument that nani-o is an adjunct rather than an argument based on the ECP phenomena. In Section 3, we illustrate the three differences between nani-o and naze mentioned above, and give our analysis, where they are base-generated in different positions. As for the status of the Accusative Case on the Accusative wh-adjunct, although Kurafuji argues that it is a structural Case, we follow Ochi (1999) in assuming that it is an inherent Case. Section 4 notes that this inherent Accusative

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1 Kurafuji (1997) judges this example as marginal, due to the Double-o constraint (See Section 3.1). Nevertheless, an Accusative wh-adjunct is compatible with a transitive verb if the direct object is marked with a focus particle (such as -bakari ‘only’) rather than an Accusative Case marker -o.

(i) John-wa nani-o henna uta-bakari utat-tei-ru no?
John-TOP nani-o henna uta-bakari utat-tei-ru no?
John-TOP what-ACC funny song-only sing-PROG-PRES Q
‘Why is John singing only funny songs?’

On the other hand, Ochi (1999) claims that the Double-o constraint is not observed in sentences like (1b).
Case is specific to the *wh*-phrase *nani*-o and is not a productive phenomenon. We speculate that the form *nani*-o is fully lexicalized and such a lexicalization process only applies to indefinites, pointing out that such a peculiar adjunct use of an indefinite is also seen in the NPI *nanimo* ‘anything.’ Section 5 concludes the paper.

## 2 Adjunct Status of Accusative *wh*-adjuncts

Kurafuji (1996) shows that the Accusative *wh*-adjunct *nani*-o behaves like other *wh*-adjuncts (e.g., *naze*) with respect to LF islands. Consider the contrast in (3).

(3) a. John-wa [karera-ga *nani*-o si-tei-ta to] it-ta/sasayai-ta no?
   John-TOP they-NOM what-ACC do-PROG-PAST C say-PAST/whisper-PAST Q
   ‘What did John say/whisper [that they were doing t]?’

b. John-wa [karera-ga *naze/nani*-o sawai-dei-ta to]
   John-TOP they-NOM why/what-ACC make-noise-PROG-PAST C
   it-ta/?*sasayai-ta no?
   say-PAST/?*whisper-PAST Q
   ‘Why did John say/whisper [that they were making a noise]?’

(3a) shows that the *wh*-phrase *nani*-o ‘what-Acc’ allows long-distance LF *wh*-extraction irrelevant of the type of the matrix predicate. On the other hand, *nani*-o ‘what-Acc,’ when interpreted as a reason adjunct, allows long-distance LF-movement only when the matrix predicate is a bridge verb (e.g. *iu* ‘say’); it doesn’t allow extraction out of a clause predicated with a non-bridge verb (e.g. *sasayaku* ‘whisper’) as shown in (3b). This behavior is the same as that of the traditional reason *wh*-adjunct *naze* ‘why.’

Similarly, the argument *nani*-o can undergo LF movement out of a complex NP (4a), while the adjunct *naze*, as well as *naze*, is sensitive to the complex NP constraint (Ross, 1967; (4b)).

(4) a. John-wa [nani-o si-tei-ru] hito-tati-o keebetusi-tei-ru no?
   John-TOP what-ACC do-PROG-PRES people-ACC despise-tei-ru no?
   ‘What is John despising people [who are doing t]?’

   John-TOP why/what-ACC make-noise-PROG-PRES people-ACC
   keebetusi-tei-ru no?
   despise-PROG-PRES Q
   ‘Why is John despising people [who are making a noise t]?’

The same contrast holds for adjunct islands, as is observed in (5). The argument *nani*-o in (5a) allows LF extraction out of an adjunct clause, although the adjunct *nani*-o and *naze* in (5b) do not.

(5) a. John-wa [karera-ga *nani*-o si-ta kara]
   John-TOP they-NOM what-ACC do-PAST because
   okot-tei-ru no?
   be-upset-PROG-PRES Q
   ‘What is John upset [because they did t]?’

b. *John-wa [karera-ga *naze/nani*-o sawai-da kara]
   John-TOP they-NOM why/what-ACC make-noise-PAST because
   okot-tei-ru no?
   be-upset-PROG-PRES Q
   ‘Why is John upset [because they made a noise t]?’

The above data show that the ‘reason’ interpretation of *nani*-o (i.e., what we call an Accusative *wh*-adjunct) shows sensitivity to LF islands, which indicates its adjunct property. Following Kurafuji, we assume below that Accusative *wh*-adjunct *nani*-o is actually an adjunct, although its form is identical to the argument *nani*-o.
3 Differences Between Accusative *wh*-adjuncts and *Naze* ‘Why’

3.1 Animacy Restriction and Speaker Inference

Despite their similarity in meaning, the Accusative *wh*-adjunct *nani-o* ‘what-Acc’ and the traditional *wh*-adjunct *naze* ‘why’ have some differences. In this section, we turn to some of these differences.

First, we observe that the Accusative *wh*-adjunct *nani-o* imposes an animacy restriction on the subject of the clause. The example (6a), where the subject is an animate noun ‘that person,’ is acceptable, while the sentence is odd with an inanimate subject ‘that book’ as in (6b).

(6) a. *Ano hito-wa nani-o yuka-de korogat-tei-ru no?*
   *That person-TOP what-ACC floor-on roll-PROG-PRES Q*
   ‘Why is that person rolling on the floor?’

   b. *Ano booru-wa nani-o yuka-de korogat-tei-ru no?*
   *That ball-TOP what-ACC floor-on roll-PROG-PRES Q*
   ‘Why is that ball rolling on the floor?’

On the other hand, there is no such restriction with the traditional *wh*-adjunct *naze*. (7) shows that *naze* is compatible with both an animate subject and an inanimate subject.

(7) a. *Ano hito-wa naze yuka-de korogat-tei-ru no?*
   *That person-TOP why floor-on roll-PROG-PRES Q*
   ‘Why is that person rolling on the floor?’

   b. *Ano booru-wa naze yuka-de korogat-tei-ru no?*
   *That ball-TOP why floor-on roll-PROG-PRES Q*
   ‘Why is that ball rolling on the floor?’

Second, sentences with Accusative *wh*-adjuncts have a special connotation that the speaker is surprised at, or is in disapproval of the animate subject’s unexpected behavior. In Ochi’s (1999:155) words, Accusative *wh*-adjuncts are “most appropriate in a context in which the speaker is emotionally affected (i.e., puzzled, annoyed, etc.) to a certain degree.” For example, the sentence (6a) indicates that the speaker thinks that that person should not be rolling on the floor and wants to know why s/he is doing that. The sentence (6b) is infelicitous because the inanimate subject ‘that ball’ is not an appropriate target for blame. On the other hand, there is no such indication of the speaker’s emotion in the sentences in (7).

The above observations indicate that licensing of the Accusative *wh*-adjunct *nani-o* is related to the speaker’s attitude in some ways. In other words, the speaker’s illocutionary force is relevant to it. Based on this intuition, syntactically we posit a functional projection (i.e., FP) that is related to such an illocutionary force, and claim that *nani-o* is licensed within this projection. Tentatively we assume that it resides in [Spec, FP], as illustrated in (8).

(8) *[CP [FP nani-o [IP kare-wa [VP sawai]] dei-ru] F no]*
   *what-ACC he-TOP make.noise PROG-PRES Q*
   ‘Why is he making a noise?’

In our analysis, the interpretation differences between *nani-o* and *naze* are attributed to the obligatory existence of FP, which embodies the speaker’s disapproving attitude/illocutionary force, in sentences with *nani-o*.

In (8), *nani-o* is base-generated in [Spec, FP], which is higher than the whole IP. If this structure surfaces as it is, *nani-o* should come before the subject. In fact, the word order where *nani-o* precedes the subject as in (8) is a possible word order. However, recall that *nani-o* can also follow the subject as shown in (1). We assume that the word order in (1) is derived by scrambling of the subject. In fact, the following facts about numeral quantifiers support the idea that the subject in (1) is a scrambled subject.

Japanese has various numeral classifiers for different classes of nouns. For example, *-nin*
‘CL(person)’ is a modifier for persons, and -satsu ‘CL(books)’ specifically modifies books. Miyagawa (1989) argues that a numeral classifier and the NP it modifies need to be in a mutual c-commanding relation in their base-positions. Consider the examples in (9).

(9) a. Gakusei-ga san-nin hon-o yon-da.  
    Student-NOM 3-CL(person) book-ACC read-PAST  
    ‘Three students read books.’

b. Gakusei-ga hon-o san-satsu yon-da.  
    Student-NOM book-ACC 3-CL(book) read-PAST  
    ‘Students read three books.’

    Student-NOM book-ACC 3-CL(people) read-PAST  
    ‘Three students read books.’

d. Hon-o_i gakusei-ga ti san-satsu yon-da.  
    Book-ACC students-NOM 3-CL(book) read-PAST  
    ‘Students read three books.’

In (9a), the classifier san-nin modifies the subject ‘students,’ and in (9b), the classifier san-satsu modifies the object ‘books.’ Both examples are acceptable because the classifier and the modified NP are base-generated adjacent to each other as sisters, c-commanding each other. (9c), on the other hand, is impossible because the classifier san-nin and the subject ‘students’ are base-generated separated from each other, without a mutual c-command relationship. In (9d), too, the classifier san-satsu is apparently separated from the object ‘books,’ which it modifies, but nevertheless, this example is acceptable. Miyagawa attributes this to the existence of scrambling in (9d). The object is base-generated in a mutually c-commanding position with the classifier although it later undergoes scrambling. Thus the licensing of a separated numeral classifier is an indication of scrambling.

In questions with Accusative wh-adjuncts such as (10), the numeral classifier below nani-o can modify the sentence-initial subject ‘students.’

(10) ?Gakusei-ga nani-o san-nin sawai-dei-ru no?  
    Student-NOM what-ACC 3-CL(people) make-noise-PROG-PRES Q  
    ‘Why are three students making noise?’

This indicates that, unlike the subject in (9c), the subject in (10) has undergone scrambling. This piece of data thus supports the analysis in (8).

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2 To many of our informants, this example sounds better with a particle -mo ‘even’ on the classifier.

(i) Gakusei-ga nani-o jyuu-nin-mo sawai-dei-ru no?  
    Student-NOM what-ACC 10-CL(people)-even make-noise-PROG-PRES Q  
    ‘Why are as many as ten students making a noise?’

In this sentence, the large size of the number of students who are making a noise is the source of the surprise/disapproval of the speaker. Such a situation is more natural than just having an indefinite DP (e.g., ‘three students’) as the target of the speaker’s surprise/disapproval.

3 Kurafuji (1996:86) observes that an Accusative wh-adjunct, similarly to naze, shows an anti-superiority effect (Watanabe, 1992).

(i) a. Dare-ga naze/nani-o sawai-dei-ru no?  
    Who-NOM why/what-ACC make-noise-PROG-PRES Q  
    ‘Who is making a noise why?’

b. ??Naze/nani-o dare-ga sawai-dei-ru no?  
    Why/What-ACC who-NOM make-noise-PROG-PRES Q  
    ‘Why is who making a noise?’

If nani-o is already higher in the structure than the subject as in our analysis, the source of the degradedness of (ib) is mysterious. However, multiple questions with the Accusative wh-adjunct nani-o are already degraded to many speakers, contra Kurafuji’s judgment on (ia). It is presumably due to the fact that, if you do not know who is making a noise, you cannot judge whether the action is surprising/inappropriate for that person or not, which makes it difficult to have the speaker’s inference we refer to in this section.
3.2 The Accusative on Accusative wh-adjuncts as an Inherent Case

This subsection discusses the status of the Accusative Case on Accusative wh-adjuncts. Kurafuji (1996, 1997) argues that the Accusative wh-adjunct nani-o has a structural Case which must be licensed in a Case position. He claims that Accusative wh-adjuncts are incompatible with passives and unaccusatives as shown in (11).

(11) a. Naze/*nani-o henna uta bakari-ga utaw-are-tei-ru no? Why/what-ACC funny song only-NOM sing-PASS-PROG-PRES Q ‘Why are only funny songs being sung?’
b. Naze/*nani-o sonnani shochuu densha-ga okurete Why/what-ACC so often train-NOM late toochakusu-ru no? arrive-PRES Q ‘Why do trains arrive late so often?’

It is traditionally assumed that passives and unaccusatives lack the ability to assign a structural Accusative Case. Kurafuji claims that Accusative wh-adjuncts require a verb with an Accusative Case feature, such as the unergative and transitive verbs in (1).

Based on the claim that the Accusative wh-adjunct nani-o gets a structural Case, Kurafuji (1997) proposes the following structure.

(12) [CP ... [vP nani-o [v’ kare-wa [vP [vP tP] sawai] de-tei] no]? What-ACC he-TOP make-noise PROG-PRES Q ‘Why is he making a noise?’

He assumes that vP has multiple Specs and that the outer Spec,vP is a Case position. Nani-o is base-generated there and is assigned Accusative Case.

The idea that the Case of nani-o is structural, on the other hand, is problematic for our analysis in (8). We claim that nani-o is base-generated in a functional projection. How a structural Case is licensed in such a position remains unclear.

However, we argue against Kurafuji’s view on an empirical basis and argue that the Accusative Case on Accusative wh-adjuncts is inherent rather than structural (Ochi, 1999). First, we observe that if the animacy condition pointed out in 3.1 is satisfied, passives and unaccusatives are compatible with Accusative wh-adjuncts, as shown in (13).

(13) a. Kare-wa nani-o minna-ni izime-rare-tei-ru no? He-TOP what-ACC everyone-by bully-PASS-PROG-PRES Q ‘Why is he bullied by everyone?’
b. Kare-wa nani-o isumo okurete toochakusu-ru no? He-TOP what-ACC always late arrive-PRES Q ‘Why does he always arrive late?’

In (13), the subject is an animate noun ‘he’ and the sentences are drastically improved compared to Kurafuji’s examples in (11). That indicates that the unacceptability of (11) is due to the animacy requirement, rather than due to the lack of structural Case. Therefore, the argument that nani-o has a structural Case based on these examples is not tenable.

Second, as Ochi (1999) observes, the Double-ø Constraint is absent in sentences with Accusative wh-adjuncts. The Double-ø Constraint is a constraint against having two Accusative-marked phrases in a clause (Harada, 1973; Shibatani, 1973). For example, consider an embedded subject in causative constructions. A causative subject (e.g., John in (14a)) can usually be marked with either Accusative or Dative. However, if the verb in the causative clause is transitive (e.g. yomu ‘read’) as in (14b), there is another Accusative-marked object (‘this book’) and John cannot be marked with the Accusative marker –o without violating the Double-ø Constraint.
Given the above, consider (15) (repeated from (1b)). The Accusative wh-adjunct _nani-o_ can occur in a transitive clause and the sentence is acceptable (or at least marginal, see Note 1).

(15) (??)Kare-wa nani-o henna uta-o utat-tei-ru no?
   He-TOP what-ACC funny song-ACC sing-PROG-PRES Q
   ‘Why is he singing a funny song?’

The fact that the Double-o Constraint is absent (or weak) in (15) suggests that _nani-o_ has a different status from other Accusative-marked phrases.

Based on these arguments, we follow Ochi (1999) in assuming that the Accusative wh-adjunct _nani-o_ has an inherent Case rather than a structural Case. Thus our analysis where _nani-o_ is base-generated in a functional projection is not problematic with respect to Case theory.

### 3.3 Impossibility of Sluicing

Another difference between the Accusative wh-adjunct _nani-o_ and the traditional wh-adjunct _naze_ is that _nani-o_ cannot undergo sluicing, as illustrated in (16a) (Ochi, 1999). Note that the argument wh-phrase _nani-o_ in (16b) is compatible with sluicing.

(16) a. John-ga (aru riyuu-de) sawa-dei-ru ga,
   John-NOM (some reason-for)make.noise-PROG-PRES but
   watasi-wa naze/*nani-o ka sira-nai.
   I-TOP why/*what-ACC Q know-not
   ‘John is making a noise (for some reason), but I don’t know why.’

   John-NOM something-ACC buy-PAST but I-TOP what-ACC Q know-not
   ‘John bought something, but I don’t know what.’

This piece of data gets an explanation under our analysis, where _nani-o_ is base-generated in a different position from other reason adjuncts.

Under the parallelism account of sluicing proposed by Fox and Lasnik (2003), the trace of a sluiced wh-phrase needs to be parallel in positions with an existential phrase in the antecedent clause. For example, in the sluicing example (17), the antecedent clause is (17a) and the sluiced clause is (17b). The semantic representations of these clauses are illustrated below.

(17) Fred said that I talked to a certain girl,
   but I don’t know which, [Fred said that I talked to t₁].
   a. The antecedent: “Fred said that I talked to a certain girl”
      \[\mathbf{f.} \mathbf{f}^{'} \text{Fred said that I talked to f'(girl)}\]
   b. The sluice: “(which girl) Fred said that I talked to t”
      \[\text{which g girl} \mathbf{g}\text{g}' \text{[Fred said that I talked to g'(girl)]}\]

In these representations, the existential operator that binds _girl_ in (17a) and the wh-operator that binds _girl_ in (17b) are scopally parallel. Also, the variable _f'(girl)_ in (17a) and the variable _g'(girl)_ in (17b) need to be in parallel positions. They argue for the sluicing of (17b) to be licensed. Fox and Lasnik (2003) argue that sluicing is only licensed in satisfaction of such a parallelism requirement.

Based on this analysis, let us turn to our analysis of _nani-o_. We claim that an Accusative wh-adjunct is base-generated in FP, while standard reason adjuncts are base-generated in a VP-
On the other hand, Kurafuji argues that reason ‘for some reason’ in the antecedent clause is in the VP-joined position as illustrated in (18).

(18) [John-ga [VP (aru riyuu-de) [VP sawai]] dei-ru] ga, watasi-wa
    John-NOM some reason-for make.noise PROG-PRES but I-TOP
      what-ACC John-NOM make-noise PROG-PRES Q know-not
      why John-NOM make-noise PROG-PRES Q know-not

Since nani-o is base-generated in Spec,FP as shown in (18a) and naze is base-generated in the same position as ‘for some reason’ as illustrated in (18b), only (18b) satisfies the parallelism requirement. Thus only the traditional wh-adjunct allows sluicing.

To summarize, assuming that Accusative wh-adjuncts are base-generated in a different position from traditional wh-adjuncts, we accounted for their incompatibility with sluicing in terms of the parallelism requirement imposed on deletion.

4 On the Peculiarity of Accusative wh-adjuncts

We have seen above that nani-o has different properties from traditional reason adjuncts. However, it remains unclear why such peculiar properties only hold for nani-o. Especially, Kurafuji (1997) raises a question as to why reason adjuncts other than the wh-phrase nani-o cannot be marked with the Accusative marker. As shown in (19), non-wh-adjuncts such as ‘(for) some reason’ never shows up with an Accusative marker.

(19) Kare-wa [sono riyuu]-de/*o sawai-dei-ru.
      He-TOP [that reason]-for/*ACC make-noise-PROG-PRES
      ‘He is making a noise *(for) that reason.’

Kurafuji tries to account for the data with a type-theoretic analysis. He argues that DPs such as ‘that reason’ are of type e. When it merges with v’ as illustrated in (20), it causes type mismatch because v’ is of type t.

(20)

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{vP*} \\
&\text{that reason-ACC: e} \\
&\text{v': } t \\
&\text{SUB: e} \\
&\text{v': } <e, t> \\
&\text{v': } <e, t>, <e, t> \\
&\text{VP: } <e, t> \\
&\text{V: } <e, t>, <e, t> \\
&\text{v} \\
&\text{tV: } <e, t>, <e, t> \\
&\text{OBJ: e}
\end{align*}
\]

If this DP is combined with the preposition for, which is of type <e, t, t>, the type becomes <t, t> and it can successfully combine with v’ as in (21). This is why the preposition is obligatory in (19).

(21)

\[
\begin{align*}
&\text{vP: } t \\
&\text{for that reason} \\
&\text{SUBJ} \\
&\text{V-v} \\
&\text{OBJ}
\end{align*}
\]

On the other hand, Kurafuji argues that reason wh-adjuncts such as naze ‘why’ and nani-o ‘what-
Acc’ are of type \(<t, t', t>\) so they can directly Merge with \(v'\). (Recall that he claims that \(nani-o\) is licensed in the outer Spec,vP as shown in (12).)

Under this analysis, however, it is still unclear why only \(wh\)-adjuncts such as \(naze\) and \(nani-o\) have the semantic type \(<t, t', t>\). The assumption seems arbitrary considering that other \(wh\)-expressions such as \(dono riyyu\) ‘which reason’ still need to be combined with the preposition \(for\), as shown in (22).

\[
(22) \text{Kare-wa [dono riyyu]-de/*o sawai-dei-ru no?} \\
\text{He-TOP [which reason]-for/*ACC make-noise-PROG-PRES Q} \\
\text{*[(For) which reason is he making a noise?]}
\]

As discussed in 3.2., we claim that \(nani-o\) gets an inherent Case rather than a structural Case. We will further assume that the form \(nani-o\) is already lexicalized with a Case marker on it; the Accusative marker \(-o\) in this case is an idiosyncratic inherent Case and it does not apply to every DP. Under this assumption, it is not problematic that the Accusative-marked adjunct is not a productive phenomenon.

Of course, just assuming that the inherent Case of \(nani-o\) is lexicalized in a peculiar way does not completely solve the problem. Why such a lexicalization process applies only to \(wh\)-phrases is still mysterious. Although the exact nature of the lexicalization is beyond the reach of this paper, below we will point out another instance which our analysis might be extended to. Thus we suggest that the peculiar adjunct use is not quite specific to \(nani-o\), but also observed in other indefinites.

(23) is an example of the Japanese NPI \(nanimo\) ‘anything.’ It usually shows up in an argument position (in this case, in the object position).

\[
(23) \text{John-wa nanimo tabe-nakat-ta.} \\
\text{John-TOP anything eat-not-PAST} \\
\text{‘John didn’t eat anything.’}
\]

Next, consider the phrase \(nanimo\) in (24) and (25). The verbs in these examples \((naku ‘cry’ and sawagu ‘make noise’, respectively)\) are intransitive and \(nanimo\) is not construed as an argument of the verb, unlike in the standard NPI example in (23).4

\[
(24) \text{[Nanimo] anata-wa naka naku-te-ii.} \\
\text{[Anything] you-TOP cry not-TE-good.} \\
\text{‘You don’t need to cry.’ ‘There is nothing to cry about.’}
\]

\[
(25) \text{Watasi-wa (nanimo) sawai-de-nai.} \\
\text{I-TOP (anything) make-noise-PROG-not} \\
\text{‘I’m not making a noise (at all).’}
\]

\text{Nanimo in these examples is optional but when it is added, the speaker’s specific emotion is accentuated. For example, nanimo in (24) indicates that the speaker is surprised that you are crying, and thinks that you should not cry. The use of nanimo in (25) shows that the speaker is being defensive after being blamed for making a noise. In both cases, this special adjunct use of nanimo expresses special speaker inferences.}

The above data show that both the \(wh\)-phrase \(nani-o\) ‘what-Acc’ and the NPI \(nanimo\) ‘anything’ have a peculiar adjunct counterpart with some speaker’s inferences. Note that these elements are both indefinite expressions and are usually licensed in questions and negation, respectively. Given this, for example, it could be the generalization that these types of peculiar adjuncts emerge from elements licensed in downward entailing contexts. Collecting more data like these and examining whether they should be subject to the same kind of analysis will help us reveal the nature of the peculiarity of Accusative \(wh\)-adjuncts and similar elements.

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4 The morpheme TE in (24) is normally used to conjoin verbs.
5 Conclusion

In this paper, we discussed properties of the Accusative wh-adjunct nani-o. Based on the fact that nani-o has an animacy restriction and it represents the speaker’s disapproving attitude towards the animate subject, we proposed that it is base-generated in the functional projection FP, which we assume is related to speaker’s illocutionary force (i.e., disapproving act of speech). Assuming that nani-o is base-generated in a different position from other reason adjuncts, we explained its incompatibility with sluicing: it violates the parallelism with the reason adjunct in the antecedent clause of sluicing. We also noted that nani-o has an inherent Case and this inherent Case is not productively applied to other DPs.

References


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